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Subject: "Christmas Confections for the Children." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Publications available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes," and "Eggs At Any Meal."

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"The worst thing about Christmas," began my next-door neighbor as she took off her coat and sat down to watch me iron Uncle Ebenezer's sea-blue shirt, (he is so particular about the collar of that shirt. The corners have to be done just so without a single tiny crease anywhere).

"The worst thing about Christmas," my neighbor repeated looking first at me and then at the blue shirt.

"Is the shopping," I suggested. "I know. I have a whole long list of gifts to buy and yet I have to take time to iron this shirt. Really --- "

"No, Aunt Sammy, not the shopping. That is bad, but it's not the worst."

"Well, the bills then, I suppose. Living is so expensive these days and everything one wants to buy is far beyond what one wants to pay. Yes, the bills are an extremely bad feature of Christmas. I know how you feel."

"No, Aunt Sammy. Shopping is tedious and the bills are bad, but the real bugbear in our household is -- candy."

"Candy a bugbear?" I asked.

Janet looked weary. "My dear, some of the mistakes we make in youth always hound us. I once said in an unguarded moment that my children could never get enough ^{candy} to satisfy them. Ever since then all our prosperous relatives who might be sending my family tricycles or roller skates or other much-needed gifts load us instead with quantities of all kinds of candy -- chocolates, bon bons, soft rich candies, hard colored candies -- everything."

"How do the children like that?"

"Oh, they love it, Aunt Sammy. That's the worst of it."

My next-door neighbor sighed. "Let me tell you what happens to our family at Christmas, Aunt Sammy. It's tragic and I don't know how to remedy matters. On Christmas morning the children come down and find the house filled with candy -- candy from aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. And they are delighted and start eating it. That's the way trouble begins. They eat it all day, just stuff themselves with fat chocolates and big rich bon bons. They by night they won't touch their milk and toast or their poached egg. The next morning they are upset and cross. No appetite for anything but more candy. And in a day or two they usually have colds. What would you suggest, Aunt Sammy?"

I felt^{that}/it was time to look stern.

"I would suggest temperance and common sense, Janet, for one thing. And for another a little study on your part about the place of sweets in the diet. Candy is a good energy food, and can be eaten by older children, but always in small quantities and only after meals. That is an old wise rule that every sensible mother knows. There is no use spoiling your children's digestions just to please their relatives. I'd lock up those packages of candy as soon as they arrived and administer their contents in small doses over a long period of time."

My next-door neighbor looked thoughtful.

In general I don't believe in preaching to anyone, especially my neighbors, but this time I thought a sermon was needed -- one on the use and abuse of sweets.

"May I read you a sentence written about this very problem by Dr. Henry Sherman, an authority on nutrition? 'Sugar should be of all foods the most cautiously used in feeding children lest it displace too much of the foods which can do what it cannot in supplying the proteins, vitamins and mineral elements which the children need so urgently and so abundantly for their healthy growth and development.'"

There is a paragraph many mothers would do well to put down in their notebooks to be ready for any discussion of candy eating.

"Wholesome sweets used in moderation and at the right time will prevent after-Christmas upsets, Janet."

"What are wholesome sweets, Aunt Sammy?"

I told my neighbor that my friends who have made a study of nutrition tell me that the best kind of sweets for children are not too concentrated and irritating and contain, along with sugar, other materials such as minerals which the child needs. There are dried fruits for example -- prunes, dates, raisins, and figs as well as peaches and apricots. They make fine confections just as they are or stuffed or chopped up and made into candy. Because

molasses contains iron it has that advantage over pure sugar. Maple sugar in small amounts is also good. Gelatine candy, such as Turkish Delight, made with fruit juice is also to be recommended. Most of these wholesome goodies you can make right in your own kitchen.

Parisian sweets are some of the simplest confections to make and excellent for the children. They are made with equal quantities of figs and dried prunes or seedless raisins and nuts; a half pound of each. That is easy to remember. I'll say it again.

1/2 pound of figs,
1/2 pound of dried prunes or seedless raisins,
1/2 pound of nut meats.

Then you will need some confectioner's sugar to roll them in.

Wash and pick over the fruit, stone the prunes, and put all the fruit through a meat chopper using the medium knife. Mix together and shape small pieces in balls, rolls or any desired shape. Roll them in confectioner's sugar and pack in waxed paper in a tin box. If you don't like nuts, the fruit can be used alone.

Turkish Raspberry Paste is another confection that children can indulge in with safety. Five ingredients are used. Here they are:

1 cup raspberry juice (You can use the juice from . . .
your canned raspberries for this)
3 tablespoons of granulated gelatine,
2 tablespoons of lemon juice,
2 cups of sugar and confectioner's sugar.

I will repeat those ingredients. (REPEAT).

To make the paste pour one-half cup of the raspberry juice over the gelatine and allow it to stand until the gelatine has absorbed the liquid. Add the other half cup of juice to the sugar and heat to the boiling point. Add the softened gelatine and boil twenty minutes. After boiling begins add the lemon juice and, if desired, a little fruit coloring in a rose shade. Turn the mixture into a straight-sided pan that has been rinsed out in cold water. When cold turn onto a paper on which confectioner's sugar has been sifted. Cut into squares and roll each square in powdered sugar.

Those two old-fashioned favorites, molasses candy and popcorn balls, also belong on the children's list.

In choosing cakes and cookies for children the same rules hold true as in selecting candy. Choose those that supply other needed food elements besides sugar and are less concentrated than sugar. Instead of selecting rich combinations of sugar and fat, I suggest hard-molasses cookies made with raisins and whole wheat flour or rolled oats or simple sponge cake.

While we are talking about children and food, I think you will be glad to know that the menu today is for a children's dinner. The menu specialist has planned one that can be made especially attractive to the child both in looks and taste. You all know how much appearances count with young appetites. If the food looks dainty and delicious, half the battle is won. Be sure the plate looks neat and the servings are not too large. Color helps a lot, too.

This menu brings in three colors -- yellow, in eggs, red in tomatoes and green in peas. Here it is: Poached Eggs on Toast with Bacon (You will find the recipe for that in the Egg Leaflet); Scalloped Tomatoes; Peas; Graham Bread and butter; Sliced Bananas and Top Milk or Cream.

Tomorrow: "Gifts From the Kitchen."

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